

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the non-final Office action dated November 21, 2005. Reexamination and reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully solicited.

Claims 1, 3-17 and 19-31 are now pending in this application, with Claims 1, 14, 17, and 28 being the independent claims. Claims 1, 6-13, 17, and 19 have been rejected. Claims 3-5 have been objected to. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of Claim 3. Claim 3 has been cancelled. Claims 4 and 5 have been amended to correct dependency in light of the cancellation of claim 3. Claim 11 has been amended in light of the amendment to Claim 1 and the Examiner's comments. Claim 17 has been amended to more accurately claim the invention. Claims 14-16 and 20-31 have been allowed. The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowance of Claims 14-16 and 20-31. No new matter is believed to have been added.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 6-13, 17 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4, 536,932 (Athey) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,071,313 (Nichols).

These rejections are respectfully traversed, at least in light of the above claim amendments. Although the Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's allegation of obviousness, for the purposes of expediting the prosecution of this application, the Applicant has amended Claim 1 to incorporate the features of Claim 3. Claim 3 has been cancelled. Claims 4 and 5 have been amended to change dependency in light of the cancellation of claim 3. The Examiner indicated that Claims 3-5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any

intervening claims. Newly amended Claim 1 now recites the features of Claim 3 and its base claim, and thus should be in a condition for allowance.

The dependent claims 4-13 are also submitted to be patentable for the reasons given above with respect to independent Claim 1, and because each recites features which are patentable in its own right.

Applicant has amended Claim 11 to introduce the fabrication of the slot by an electric discharge wire machine. This limitation has been canceled from claim 1 in light of the Examiner's comments. This limitation was previously added to claim 1 in light of a condition of allowance by the Examiner, which was subsequently withdrawn by the Examiner. The limitation is now included in dependent claim 11. Applicant asserts that in light of the Examiner's comments, claim 1 remains in a condition for allowance as presented in the newly amended claims.

Applicant has amended Claim 17 to include the J-shaped slot limitation.

The dependent Claim 19 is also submitted to be patentable for the reasons given above with respect to independent Claim 17, and because it recites features which are patentable in its own right.

Therefore, based on the above-presented arguments, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has allowed claims 14-16 and 20-31. The Examiner has objected to claims 3-5 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if

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rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As previously detailed, the Applicant has amended Claim 1 to incorporate the features of Claim 3, and cancelled claim 3. Claims 4 and 5 have been amended to change dependency in light of the cancellation of claim 3. It is believed that the amendment to claim 1 places it in a condition for allowance as well as claims 4-16 depending therefrom.

Conclusion

Based on the above, independent Claims 1 and 17 are now patentable over the citations of record. The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable for the reasons given above with respect to the independent claims and because each recite features which are patentable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

Hence, Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office action, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number.

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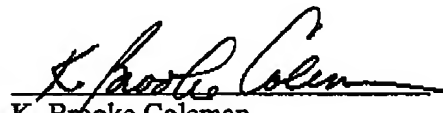
If for some reason Applicant has not paid a sufficient fee for this response, please consider this as authorization to charge Ingrassia, Fisher & Lorenz, Deposit Account No. 50-2091 for any fee which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

INGRASSIA FISHER & LORENZ

Dated: 12-28-05

By:



K. Brooke Coleman

Reg. No. 37,598

(480) 385-5060